

Source: Daily Labor Report: News Archive > 2014 > May > 05/30/2014 > News > Education: SEIU Local 1021 Sees Representation Wins At San Francisco Art Institute, Mills College

**104 DLR A-9****Education****SEIU Local 1021 Sees Representation Wins At San Francisco Art Institute, Mills College**

*By Joyce E. Cutler*

May 30 — Adjunct instructors at San Francisco Art Institute voted May 30 for Service Employees International Union Local 1021 as their bargaining representative, the latest development in the union's nationwide Adjunct Action campaign.

The SFAI adjuncts, called "visiting faculty" by the private nonprofit arts school, voted 124-35 to join SEIU Local 1021.

The SFAI instructors were the second group of teachers at a San Francisco Bay Area private sector school in a month to join Local 1021. Some 138 instructors at Mills College in Oakland, Calif., voted to form a union by a 78 percent margin in ballots the National Labor Relations Board counted May 14.

"We want an end to a climate of fear that resonates even where we gather online," Dale Carrico, an SFAI critical thinking professor, said in a statement. "We want the security to do the work on which SFAI depends whether it admits it or not. We want the standing to communicate our knowledge of the needs and problems of the institution to which we are devoted without fear of reprisal."

"Our next step is to negotiate the best contracts we can, to reflect and secure our real stake in the shared project of teaching at SFAI," Carrico, who helped organize the campaign, told Bloomberg BNA.

The next step for the newly organized SFAI instructors is to elect a bargaining team of other adjuncts and conduct a bargaining survey to determine priorities for their contract, Local 1021 spokeswoman Jennifer Smith-Camejo told Bloomberg BNA May 30.

An SFAI representative couldn't be reached for comment.

**Parties Prepare for Bargaining at Mills**

As both sides begin preparations for negotiating a first contract at Mills College, the Mills Vice President for Finance and Administration Tammi D. Jackson said May 29 that the college is "still in the early stages of data gathering."

"Thus, it is still uncertain when contract negotiations will begin," Jackson said. Other unionized Mills employees include engineers represented by International Union of Operating Engineers Local 39; a mechanic and landscapers represented by SEIU Local 1877; and one truck driver is represented by International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Jackson said via e-mail.

Mills instructor Ben Brown said organizing the non-tenure-track teachers union "is the only way that NTT faculty can play a role in changing higher education to get job stability and a living wage for themselves and a better education for their students."

"Every semester that I have taught at Mills I've been given a take it or leave it salary for teaching a course. Although I am happy to counsel students on prelaw matters and, when I taught in the department of public policy, participate in events for incoming students, I did not receive any pay for these activities," Brown, who also teaches at the University of California, Berkeley under a union contract, told Bloomberg BNA.

Instructors receive the same salary whether preparing a new course or teaching an old course, Brown said. Preparing a new course "can easily take 400% more time than teaching a prepared course," he said in an e-mail. "And, I have no guarantee that my development of this intellectual property will pay off in the future since I have no control over whether I teach this course again," he said.

**Fissured Workforce, Wage Issues**

David A. Rosenfeld, a shareholder with Weinberg, Roger & Rosenfeld P.C., a labor-side law firm in Alameda, Calif., said the move to organize adjunct teachers is "reflective of the fissured workplace where people have a lot of part-time jobs."

"I don't make a living off my teaching," Rosenfeld, who teaches at UC Berkeley School of Law, told Bloomberg BNA.

As of 2013, the number of classes an SFAI adjunct can teach is capped at four annually, said Katie Anania, a lecturer and a PhD candidate in modern and contemporary art at the University of Texas at Austin.

The starting salary, which does not increase on a regular schedule, is \$5,500 per class, "so the most an adjunct can make is \$22,000 per year to start," Anania said in a May 30 e-mail to Bloomberg BNA. "Salary increases are awarded at the discretion of the chair (read: rarely), or in the case someone earns a higher degree like an MFA or PhD while teaching at the school," she said.

SFAI's Carrico told Bloomberg BNA: "The community we have built through organizing and the security we gain through negotiating an equitable contract will provide us the vantage from which we will begin the most important work of all: improving the conditions in which our students learn and grow here and contribute their full measure of creativity and intelligence to the world outside the classroom."

### **Support Issues**

One of the reasons Javier Arbona endorses the organizing campaign at the private California College of Arts in Oakland, Calif., is the lack of support the estimated 400 adjuncts receive, which ends up shortchanging students, he said.

"If I sat down to write a syllabus, readings, prepare course plans before my contract kicked in, that was all time I was spending on my own dime, so you're not really incentivized to do that. That's not a fair situation. That's a wage theft as far as I'm concerned," Arbona told Bloomberg BNA May 29.

Arbona said instructors get paid about \$1,500 a month teaching a seminar, "and if I'm teaching a seminar here and there, if you're able to cobble together enough courses, in a good year you can get \$40,000."

Matteo Bittanti, an adjunct visual arts professor at CCA, said in a May 30 e-mail that very few adjunct professors have any kind of benefits.

"In short, they are expendable, contingent, and powerless. Adjunct Professors are part of the precariat. They are the cannon fodder of academia. Institutions have no interest in promoting Adjunct Professors and they do anything they possibly can to postpone any advancement and foster more job insecurity. It is a perverse system," Bittanti said.

### **Growing Movement**

SEIU said more than half of faculty members nationwide are contingent as are about 75 percent of Bay Area instructors.

Adjunct faculty at Northeastern University voted narrowly in favor of SEIU representation in results announced May 15 (96 DLR A-3, 5/19/14). The Northeastern vote followed SEIU election wins among adjuncts at Lesley University in the Cambridge, Mass., area in February (38 DLR A-11, 2/26/14) and at Tufts University in Medford, Mass., in September 2013 (188 DLR A-5, 9/27/13).

"I do think it's going to go someplace because this group is educated, understands about the values of unions and they haven't been misled into thinking they're professionals and they shouldn't have a union," Rosenfeld said.

Rosenfeld said "there is a critical difference here" for public sector instructors and those who teach at private institutions.

"If you're a public institution, it depends on the state law involved, so in California that's more easily done than in South Carolina. In South Carolina in a private institution, it's all governed by the National Labor Relations Act," he said. "You see adjuncts organizing where they have good public sector laws like California, New York, Oregon. You'll see some in other states anyway because workers do organize even though the public sector laws" may not be as friendly, he said.

F. Curt Kirschner Jr., a management-side partner with Jones Day in San Francisco, said May 28 that the attempted organizing of adjunct faculty "does seem to be growing."

"To my knowledge, the role and compensation of Adjunct Faculty varies significantly among colleges. Whether organizing helps address the concerns of the Adjunct Faculty members that prompted organizing remains to be seen," Kirschner said in an e-mail to Bloomberg BNA.

To contact the reporter on this story: Joyce E. Cutler in San Francisco at [jcutler@bna.com](mailto:jcutler@bna.com)

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Susan J. McGolrick at [smcgolrick@bna.com](mailto:smcgolrick@bna.com)

---

Contact us at <http://www.bna.com/contact/index.html> or call 1-800-372-1033

ISSN 1522-5968

Copyright © 2014, The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc.. Reproduction or redistribution, in whole or in part, and in any form, without express written permission, is prohibited except as permitted by the BNA Copyright Policy.